TRAVANCORE GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, SUPPLEMENT.

TUESDAY, 8th December 1903.

Abstract Proceedings of the Travancore Legislative Council.

The Council met in the Dewan's room, Public Offices, at 1 P. M., on Saturday the 5th December 1903. / 20th Vrichigom 1079.

PRESENT.

M. R. Ry. Dewan Bahadur K. Krishnaswamy Rao Avergal, C. I. E., F. M. U., Dewan ... ... *Presiding.*

M. R. Ry. V. Nagam Aiya Avergal, B. A., F. R. H. S.

M. R. Ry. A. Govinda Pillai Avergal, B. A., B. L., F. M. U.

M. R. Ry. T. Rajaram Row Avergal, B. A.

M. R. Ry. V. I. Kesava Pillai Avergal, M. A.

Mr. H. S. Ferguson.

M. R. Ry. S. Dharmaraja Iyer Avergal.

Mr. K. K. Kuruvila, B. C. E.

PLANTERS LABOUR BILL.

Mr. Rajaram Row.—At one of the former meetings of this Council, I obtained permission to introduce a Bill for amending the present law relating to criminal breaches of contract, but I did not follow up that permission by the actual introduction of such a Bill, because I thought, as I explained to the Council on the 28th February last, that I could embody in it several provisions of the Planters' Labour Law which was about being passed by the Madras Legislative Council. Since then, that Labour Law has been passed as Act I of 1903, and I have carefully looked into it. But, for reasons which I shall explain in another connection later on this afternoon, I find the two subjects have to be treated separately. My present object is, therefore, to ask the Council's permission to introduce a Bill to regulate the relations between the planters and their coolies on the estates. After the varied discussions which have taken place in the Madras Legislative Council, discussions which must be fresh in the memories of most people, there is very little that I shall have to say by way of explanation about the necessity for such a law. Whatever necessity there is in the Madras Presidency for such a law, that necessity there is in Travancore also, for we have five large planting districts, namely, Ashamboo, Ponmudi, Shencottah, Peermade and Kanan Devan Hills, comprising nearly 120 estates, the area of all of which must be nearly a lac of acres. These estates which are all on the Hills are owned by 54 proprietors, of whom some are single individuals and others corporate bodies, and several thousands of labourers from the low country are employed for work there every day. The relations between the employers of labour and the

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employed have, however, been very indefinite, and there have been complaints from both sides that the existing legal enactments are not sufficiently far-reaching to protect both the large capital employed in the planting enterprise and the interests of labourers who work under the planters. After the passing of Act I of 1903 in the Madras Presidency, an influential Planters Association in Travancore has applied to the Government for the enactment of a similar law, and I, therefore, apply to you now for permission to introduce, on a subsequent day, a Bill on the lines of that Act.

Permission was granted accordingly.

ARMS REGULATION AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. Kesava Pillai.—I beg for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Arms Regulation, III of 1061. The existing Regulation provides only for the control of the export, import, manufacture and sale of arms, ammunition and military stores, and does not place any check on the *possession* and *use* of arms and ammunition. The unrestricted possession and use of fire-arms is not conducive to public safety; and hence the question of amending the law so as to make compulsory the taking of licenses for the possession of arms, has been under consideration for some time; and the views of the District Magistrates and the Superintendent of Police on the subject have been obtained.

The Bill proposes to introduce the provisions of the Indian Arms Act, XI of 1878 regulating the possession and use of arms. But the term 'Arms' as defined in the British Indian Act has a wide significance, and it is not necessary to bring all classes of arms under the license system. It is thought enough if the restriction be imposed solely with respect to fire-arms and other arms of a dangerous character.

The necessity for allowing the free use of arms by people residing in forest tracts for protection against attacks from wild beasts has been duly considered and provided for in the proposed measure.

I hope the Council will grant permission to introduce the Bill.

Permission was granted accordingly.

BREACH OF CONTRACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. Rajaram Row.—The third item of work on to-day's Agenda is the introduction of a Bill for the amendment of the present law relating to criminal breaches of contract. I have first to request that rule 33 of the Rules governing the conduct of business of this Council be suspended before I proceed further.

The Council having suspended the rule, Mr. Rajaram Row introduced the Bill and in doing so said:

I may assure the Council at the outset that I do not mean to ask them to consider the principle of the Bill to-day, but I shall only ask that the Bill which has already been printed and published and copies of which have been furnished to the members may be simply introduced into the Council.

I have already mentioned that I have thought it well to treat this as a separate measure unconnected with the Planters Labour Law, and shall briefly explain my reasons for thinking so. Whereas this Bill will deal, as the present law itself does, with every class of criminal breach of contract committed in any part of the State by artificers and workmen generally, the Planters Labour Law will regulate the supply and treatment of labour on plantations, that is, on certain areas only in the country which will be specified and proclaimed by notifications as being brought under its operations. The two enactments will thus be distinct in their main characteristics, and, when passed into law, will have to find separate places in the statute book.

Seconded by Mr. Kesava Pillai.

The motion was put and agreed to.

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